(d) the progress of the investigation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) In the blast on 18 February 2007 in Delhi-Attari Express, the link train of Samjhauta express, 68 people were killed and 12 injured. Out of the 49 dead bodies identified, 40 were of Pakistani nationals. The identified dead bodies were handed over to their relatives.

(b) to (d) The investigation is currently in progress. Government expect that the Government of Pakistan will provide access to the Pakistani passengers of the train if required for the investigation.

Children kept hostage in Malaysia

†2612. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 27 children of Jamshedpur situated in Jharkhand are kept hostage in Malaysia;

(b) if so, the action being taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, whether Government would take necessary steps for the release of these children after investigating the facts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government have seen news reports stating that twenty seven children from Jamshedpur, Jharkhand have been held as hostages in Malaysia. The Indian High Commission in Malaysia has requested the local authorities to investigate the matter on a priority basis.

Killing of fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy

2613. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM:
SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Government has taken any steps to stop the killing of innocent fishermen of Tamil Nadu by Sri Lankan Navy;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has taken up the matter with Sri Lankan authorities;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the reactions thereto and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what is the quantum of compensation given to the affected families?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government have strongly taken up the matter of incidents of firing on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy with the Government of Sri Lanka. The need for the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and for our fishermen to be treated in humane manner has been repeatedly emphasised to the Government of Sri Lanka.

(c) In response, the Government of Sri Lanka have denied that their Navy ever enters Indian territorial waters and claimed that their Naval ships were not deployed in areas where the incidents occurred.

(d) An immediate cash relief of Rs. 1 Lakh is being paid to the legal heir of the deceased by the Government of Tamil Nadu from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund. Apart from this, the family of the deceased fisherman is being paid a sum of Rs. 50,000 under the Fishermen Accident Group Insurance Scheme, if the deceased is a member of any Fishermen Cooperative Society.

Joint mechanism for terrorism

†2614. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any consensus had emerged to formulate a joint mechanism to eradicate terrorism in the fourth round of dialogue held between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan had put forward a condition to keep the violence in Jammu & Kashmir out of the purview of the anti-terrorist joint mechanism;

(c) if so, the decision that has been taken by Government in this regard;

(d) whether Pakistan Government have agreed to hand over the most wanted criminals hiding in Pakistan to India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The first meeting of India-Pakistan Joint Anti-terrorism Mechanism took place on 6-7 March 2007 in Islamabad. At this meeting,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.